

GENERAL ARRANGEMENT OF PRINTED MATTER

in the

ARMY MEDICAL LIBRARY

(Present practice of May 1, 1941)

While there have been published many different schemes for the classification of books in libraries in general and also in medical libraries the actual arrangement and shelving of printed matter remains always a problem for solution by the individual library. The system or practice of one library cannot be adopted by another library without important changes. It is the scope and the size of the library which should be considered in any classification or re-classification of books. Often it happens that an adopted method of shelving proves to be cumbersome or useless as the library increases in size or as its aims and service policies change. This is especially true if a library is arranged according to a rigid classification of subjects.

The present practice of the Army Medical Library in arranging its acquisitions is a combination. In the beginning the Library adopted the method of classification by subjects. Later on, it was necessary to separate from the main stock certain groups of publications on the basis of their forms or special nature. But under each group or subdivision the further arrangement was made in alphabetical order.

The main stock of books is arranged under subjects. There are about 70 subjects, including the well-known branches of medicine (Anatomy; Dermatology; Gynecology; Radiology, etc.) and some special topics such as Blood; Foot; Hair; Marriage, etc. Under each subject the books are shelved from A to Z of the authors. A large number of books ~~that~~ could not be squeezed into any of the selected subjects; these had to be separated, and the group is referred to in this Library as "The Alphabet". In addition, further separation of small and large folios has been necessary; thus, we have a "Quarto" and a "Folio" set, as well as a special shelving for "Atlases." Unbound volumes and smaller pamphlets, if they do not fall into a certain class of printed matter to be mentioned later, are put into boxes, and they are referred to as "Box items". There are more than a thousand such steel boxes numbered, and in each the pamphlets are arranged in the alphabetical order of its contents.



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Further separation of publications from the main stock have resulted in the establishment of eight special groups with independent shelving:

1. Periodicals: serials of a current year are exhibited on the shelves of the Periodical Reading Room. At the end of the year they are bound and shelved separately in the main book collection, where they are arranged under the countries of origin. Publications of congresses are again grouped separately. Society publications have a separate arrangement of their own. Unbound periodicals as well as incomplete volumes of journals are temporarily set aside.

2. Rare books: for their better protection, books of value are kept in glass cases. They fall into three sections: a. rare books in general; b. incunabula; c. 16th century authors, each section having its own alphabetical order.

3. Manuscripts:

4. Theses: arranged in boxes under the names of schools and universities, where their authors graduated. It includes also habilitation writings of university professors, and a few orations of rectors of schools.

5. Statistics and documents: contains publications of health agencies, hospitals, governments, agricultural and other schools, etc. They are arranged under geographical names (countries, counties, cities) and in a chronological order.

6. Reference works: includes catalogs, biographies, bibliographies, directories, encyclopedias, works on library science, and all the tools necessary for the publication of the Index-Catalogue.

7. Reprints and collected papers: arranged in two sections in the alphabet of authors.

8. Clippings: arranged by authors.

As a special group the accumulation of duplicates should also be mentioned. This group includes periodicals as well as books and pamphlets. They were arranged originally on shelves in the basement of the Library, but lack of space made it necessary to pack them in large boxes and send them away from the Library to a special storage point. About 50 tons are stored thus.

Access to both the main collection of books and the separate groups is secured through the main card catalog and the printed Index-Catalogue though several groups have their own card catalog also.

